

West Hartford Substance Abuse Prevention Commission (SAPC)
Meeting Minutes
October 8, 2015

Attendees: Jeff Bersin, Joanna Curry-Sartori, Jackie Colon, Dan Jordan, Helen Droган, Julian Hartt, Marc Kotler, Maya Fiores, Milad Shams, Zacharie Mega, Rebecca Burke, Grace Johnson, Mojgan Shams

Welcome / Introductions / Approve Minutes / Early Departures / Announcements/Refreshments

Approve minutes- motion to approve. Send off minutes

Announcements:

- The Next Right Thing- now has a dual diagnosis capable program for adolescents. For more info contact info@nextrightthing.net
- A new Treatment study for teens with Marijuana and/or alcohol abuse and depression is beginning at UConn Medical Center. For more info contact Rebecca at (860) 679 8478, burke@uchc.edu
- The Bridge Family Center offers a variety of presentations for school faculty and parents (e.g on stress management, mindfulness and parenting). If interested in learning more contact Joanna Curry-Sartori, joanna@bridgefamilycenter.org, (860) 313 – 1119 ext 109

Budget

- Funding available through CASAC has increased this year to \$7,116.
- Want to expand the focus of what we will support, e.g. anxiety, stress management and other contributing factors to substance abuse.
- Budget needs to be finalized by mid-November to allow time to collect town approvals prior to submission due date.

General Discussion

(Context: Following the updates about the budget, meeting participants engaged in an open discussion about the needs we are seeing in town, the root causes of substance abuse and the most high leverage and cohesive ways we might focus on addressing these root causes.)

Jackie spoke of building student leadership groups and raised the question about how we can create positive school climate. She noted the increase in stress levels amongst students.

Conard student shared his experience being a “Link” leader- an upper classman helping freshman. These leaders are very helpful and ease anxiety for freshman. He asked how we can have more peer mentoring.

Marc shared how at KP they have the program for 40 8th graders to mentor 6th graders.

Joanna acknowledged the theme that intergenerational dialogues work, in this case older students mentor younger students.

Julian said we need to change the dialogue from saying “don’t do drugs” to addressing root causes like communication between kids and adults and also stress levels.

Helen suggested we could have a town wide talk on stress etc and then break into groups to continue the dialogue in schools.

Jeff- We could start our own meetings with breathing.

RE Parenting- there was a discussion about how to parent at different ages

Parents have to be involved in learning about stress management – to handle their own stress and to help their children. Suggestion: Do survey of parents re what needs, what want to learn, when they could come. (Joanna is already planning a parent survey at Charter Oak).

Grace- spoke of human rights group at Conard and asking for a stipend for speakers about domestic violence, sexual assault, and negative effect of drugs.

Jeff explained that re funding, we should ask ourselves--- if the program or event had a sign that said it was sponsored by SAPC would that sponsorship make sense?

Jackie- explained that existing programs currently being utilized in middle school are very expensive to train. Advisors do off site training and then can only apply it in their school. Similar with Second Step – we bought the materials and it had to stay in the building.

Jeff wondered if we can develop some of these programs ourselves in town from scratch or do we need to spend the money to purchase prebuilt curriculums.

Zacharie (LBE Student Leader) - LBE has led workshops in Sedgwick re transition to high school and plans to continue this year. LBE group is talking about managing stress and especially how to respond to testing. LBE asking not just how to keep kids from doing drugs, but bigger picture about why they do drugs and looking at how to support healthy choices. They are having conversations about how to get perspective in terms of what is important and why they do things (e.g. to make parent's proud) and that it is important to step back, get perspective and make choices for yourself. They are talking about the importance of schools teaching students how to deal with stress.

Joanna offered to meet with LBE to make presentation on the nature of stress and mindfulness/ stress management.

Jackie- asked if the Bridge could be hired to lead parent workshops, as the therapists are members of our community vs. spending the money to hire outside speakers/facilitators. (Joanna and Jeff will take idea off line).

Dan- what if all SAPC activities this year are organized around one central theme? – a year long initiative and dialogue. Topic: Relax, understand why you are stressed and learn the tools to help. Help teens develop a sense of power over their own well-being. Give parents these skills as well. Support dialogue between teens and parents about stress.

New Business

There was no new business.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanna Curry-Sartori

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